

when action is required. That is precisely what we have done today.

Thank you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Cabinet Meeting

June 28, 1993

The President. First, I want to say that this morning I received a report from the National Security Adviser about the action in Iraq over the weekend, confirming that we did in fact cripple the Iraqi intelligence capacity, which was the intent of the action. Our allies have been quite positive in their response. And I want to say a special word of compliment to Ambassador Albright for the work she did at the United Nations yesterday. I thought it was an excellent job.

I think it's very important today at this Cabinet meeting that we move on to other matters, that we go back to the domestic agenda. We have to prepare for the conference on the budget and the economic plan. We need to think about and talk a little about the upcoming G-7 summit in Tokyo and what that means for our economic prospects here at home. And there are a number of other issues that I want to discuss today, including our efforts to seek rapid passage of the national service act.

So I'm anxious to go forward. I do want to acknowledge, the first time as a confirmed member of this Cabinet, Lee Brown. He was here last time, but he's been confirmed since he was here before. Tom Glynn, the Deputy Secretary of Labor, is here, for those of you who don't know him, because Mr. Reich is moving his family to Washington today. I suppose that means he's going to stay on for a while. *[Laughter]*

Strike on Iraqi Intelligence Headquarters

Q. Mr. President, what kind of message were you sending, first of all, to other terrorist nations, given what we now know about the possibility of Iran and potentially Sad-

dam? And what message do you think this sends also to other countries and to the military here about your resolve in your capacity as Commander in Chief?

The President. Well, the action I took I thought was clearly warranted by the facts. And I think other terrorists around the world need to know that the United States will do what we can to combat terrorism, as I said in my statement on Saturday evening. It is plainly what we ought to be doing.

Q. —the events last week in New York and the attack over the weekend in Baghdad, should the American people be concerned about terrorism on American shores in the next few weeks?

The President. I think the American people should be reassured that the—in the New York instance, that the Federal authorities and the New York Police Department did a good job. I think the American people know enough about terrorism to know that it is always a potential problem, but we are going to be very aggressive in dealing with it, and we're going to do everything we possibly can to deal with it.

Q. Mr. President, how does the decision to have gone ahead and bombed Baghdad on Saturday, how will this impact your Presidency both in terms of how you're seen domestically and by foreign leaders?

The President. I have no idea. I did my job. It was my job, and I did it the best I could.

Q. Don't you think it will have some political effects—

Q. Any political considerations, Mr. President, at all?

The President. I have no idea. It's my job. I did exactly what I said I'd do in the campaign when confronted by circumstances like this. The evidence was clear. And we took the appropriate action. And it was the right thing to do for the United States, and I feel quite comfortable with it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on
the Strike on Iraqi Intelligence
Headquarters**

June 28, 1993

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Commencing at approximately 4:22 p.m. (EST) on June 26, 1993, at my direction, U.S. naval forces launched a Tomahawk cruise missile strike on the Iraqi Intelligence Service's (IIS) principal command and control complex in Baghdad. This facility is the headquarters for the IIS, which planned the failed attempt to assassinate former President Bush during his visit to Kuwait in April of this year. This U.S. military action was completed upon impact of the missiles on target at approximately 6 p.m. (EST).

Operating under the United States Central Command, two U.S. Navy surface ships launched a total of 23 precision-guided Tomahawk missiles in this coordinated strike upon the key facilities in the IIS compound. The USS PETERSON (DD 969) launched 14 missiles from its position in the Red Sea, while the USS CHANCELLORSVILLE (CG 62) in the Arabian Gulf launched nine missiles. The timing of this operation, with missiles striking at approximately 2:00 a.m. local Iraqi time, was chosen carefully so as to minimize risks to innocent civilians. Initial reports indicate that heavy damage was inflicted on the complex. Regrettably, there were some collateral civilian casualties.

I ordered this military response only after I considered the results of a thorough and independent investigation by U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The reports by Attorney General Reno and Director of Central Intelligence Woolsey provided compelling evidence that the operation that threatened the life of President Bush in Kuwait City in April was directed and pursued by the Iraqi Intelligence Service and that the Government of Iraq bore direct responsibility for this effort.

The Government of Iraq acted unlawfully in attempting to carry out Saddam Hussein's threats against former President Bush because of actions he took as President. The evidence of the Government of Iraq's violence and terrorism demonstrates that Iraq

poses a continuing threat to United States nationals and shows utter disregard for the will of the international community as expressed in Security Council Resolutions and the United Nations Charter. Based on the Government of Iraq's pattern of disregard for international law, I concluded that there was no reasonable prospect that new diplomatic initiatives or economic measures could influence the current Government of Iraq to cease planning future attacks against the United States.

Consequently, in the exercise of our inherent right of self-defense as recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and pursuant to my constitutional authority with respect to the conduct of foreign relations and as Commander in Chief, I ordered a military strike that directly targeted a facility Iraqi intelligence implicated in the plot against the former Chief Executive. In accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, this action was reported immediately to the Security Council on June 26. On June 27, Ambassador Albright provided evidence of Iraq's assassination attempts to the United Nations Security Council, which had been convened in emergency session at our request.

I am certain that you share my sincere hope that the limited and proportionate action taken by the United States Government will frustrate and help deter and preempt future unlawful actions on the part of the Government of Iraq. Nonetheless, in the event that Iraqi violence, aggression, or state-sponsored terrorism against the United States continues, I will direct such additional measures in our exercise of the right of self-defense as may be necessary and appropriate to protect United States citizens.

I remain committed to ensuring that the Congress is kept fully informed regarding significant employments of the U.S. Armed Forces. Accordingly, I am providing this report on the U.S. military actions of June 26, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate your thoughts and continued support as we address these important concerns.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton